

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1863
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PROP PL EG IS UR US XF
SUBJ: POLISH PRESS COVERAGE OF SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL

1. EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL WAS A FRONT-PAGE STORY IN POLAND. POLISH PRESS AGENCY (PAP) DISPATCHES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST EMPHASIZED THE NEGATIVE REACTION IN THE ARAB WORLD BEFORE AND AFTER THE VISIT. PLO AND BAATHIST PARTY CONDEMNATIONS OF THE SADAT MISSION AS THE ACTION OF A TRAITOR TO THE ARAB CAUSE RECEIVED PROMINENT PLAY. PAP CORRESPONDENT JAN URBANIAK WROTE THAT ASIDE FROM "EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA", THERE WERE "PRACTICALLY NO STATEMENTS WHICH APPROVED OR JUSTIFIED SADAT'S STEP. THOSE WHO DO NOT CRITICIZE HIM OR EVEN PRAISE HIM REFRAIN FOR THE TIME BEING FROM SAYING ANYTHING." IN AN EDITORIAL WHICH APPEARED BEFORE THE VISIT, THE MASS CIRCULATION DAILY ZYCIE WARSZAWY REPORTED NOVEMBER 17 THAT ISRAELI INTENTIONS ARE CLEAR: TO DIVIDE THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND SETTLE WITH EACH SEPARATELY. EGYPT ALLEGEDLY

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IS THE FIRST TARGET BECAUSE IT "IS NOT DISPOSED TO COMPROMISE."

2. WHILE SLANTED TOWARD THE POSITION OF THE REJECTIONIST FRONT, COVERAGE OF THE VISIT ITSELF WAS FAIRLY EXTENSIVE. URBANIAK WROTE: "THE FORMULA CONTAINED IN THE COMMUNIQUE UNAMBIGUOUSLY POINTS TO THE INTENTION TO CONTINUE SEPARATE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN TALKS. SUCH A POSITION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER ARAB

COUNTRIES." POLISH COMMENTARY ECHOED THE ACCUSATIONS OF SADAT'S ARAB CRITICS THAT HIS TRIP TO ISRAEL IMPLIED RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL, WITH JERUSALEM AS ITS CAPITAL, WITHOUT DEMANDING OR RECEIVING ANYTHING IN RETURN. SADAT'S PRESENTATION BEFORE THE KNESSET OF ARAB DEMANDS FOR TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED LANDS AND CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE WAS DEPICTED AS AN ATTEMPT TO APPEASE HOSTILE ARAB OPINION RATHER THAN AS A TRUE REFLECTION OF HIS NEGOTIATING POSITION. ON THE OTHER HAND, ACCORDING TO URBANIAK, BEGIN, IN "ANSWERING THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT...REPEATED THE OLD SONG THAT HE IS READY TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT EVERYTHING AND AT THE SAME TIME EMPHASIZED WITH UNUSUAL BRUTALITY -- IN PARLIAMENT AND AT A PRESS CONFERENCE--THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO THE ENTIRETY OF FORMER PALESTINE AND OTHER SEIZED LANDS." SADAT'S TUMULTUOUS RECEPTION IN CAIRO UPON HIS RETURN FROM ISRAEL WAS NOT MENTIONED.

3. REGARDING REACTIONS TO THE VISIT, URBANIAK SAW AS THE ONE POSITIVE ELEMENT THE LIKELIHOOD OF CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG ARAB "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" IN THE WAKE OF SADAT'S DISRUPTIVE MOVE. THE PRESS GAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION TO REACTIONS OUTSIDE THE ARAB WORLD. IT DID REPORT A DEMONSTRATION OF 200 ARAB STUDENTS IN MOSCOW PROTESTING THE TRIP. MACIEJ SLOTWINSKI, A ZYCIE WARSZAWY CORRESPONDENT IN THE UNITED STATES, REPORTED THAT THE U.S. PRESS WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE SADAT MISSION, WHILE OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT REACTION WAS MUTED. URBANIAK WROTE: "THERE IS NO LACK IN THE UNITED STATES OF VOICES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPRESSING DOUBT WITH RESPECT TO THE RESULTS OF THE VISIT." FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER WAS CITED AS ONE WHO "BELONGS TO THOSE OBSERVERS WHO EXPRESS FEARS THAT SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL MAY POSTPONE OR EVEN MAKE IMPOSSIBLE THE RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE."

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF THE NORMAL CORDIALITY OF POLISH-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT ANOMALOUS THAT POLISH COVERAGE OF THE SADAT VISIT WAS SO ONE-SIDED, WITH NO REFERENCE TO EGYPT'S SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE LONG CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. CLEARLY, THE HARD LINE TAKEN IN BOTH REPORTAGE AND COMMENTARY IN MOSCOW WAS SET AND IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT DEVIATION WOULD BE ESPECIALLY UNWELCOME. END COMMENT. DAVIES

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